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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 001827

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TAGS: PREL UNGA IS PM

SUBJECT: PANAMA: WEIGHING "OVERALL POLICY REVIEW" OF  
ISRAEL RESOLUTIONS

REF: (A) STATE 159386 (B) PANAMA 1813

Classified By: Ambassador William A. Eaton. Reasons: 1.4 (b)  
and (d)

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Weighing Overall Policy Review of Israel Resolutions  
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¶11. (C) "Panama is considering an overall policy review of its positions on the various Israel resolutions that come up every year in the UN General Assembly (UNGA)," First VP and FM Samuel Lewis told Ambassador on December 3 in response to reftel A demarche. Lewis added, "I don't know if there would be any change in our votes this year" on the three resolutions raised in reftel A. Noting that there were several other Israel-related resolutions, Lewis said voting on these resolutions had become little more than "an accounting exercise" without any real thought or consideration being given to the substance of these resolutions. Noting that the MFA had proposed that President consider a trip to the Middle East in the first half of 2008, Lewis noted that as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) "Panama wants to contribute to the peace process."

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Comment  
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¶12. (C) Post believes that it is unlikely that Panama will change its votes on these annual resolutions for the current UNGA. Panama will vote most likely just like it did in 2006. Down the road though, cautious optimism that Panama might change its votes on Israel resolutions is warranted, but will need to be nurtured by U.S. (and Israeli) engagement with the GOP.

EATON